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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: MDC GENERAL SECRETARY IN ACCRA: SEEKS GREATER
PRESSURE ON MUGABE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sue K Brown for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)
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11. (C) SUMMARY: On April 16, Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Secretary General Tendai Biti, who is visiting Accra to see President Kufour, met with Western diplomats to discuss the post-election situation in Zimbabwe. Biti said that the MDC would call on the international community to impose economic sanctions against Zimbabwe if President Mugabe continued in office past June 1, and that the MDC would urge countries to withdraw recognition of Mugabe's government. Biti added that South African President Mbeki's role as SADC mediator is "becoming part of the problem." Biti met later in the day with Kufour to update him on the situation in Zimbabwe. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) MDC General Secretary Biti, accompanied by party official Issac Maposa, met with diplomats from the U.S., UK and Dutch embassies in Accra on April 16 (NOTE: The meeting took place at the MDC's request. END NOTE). Biti, who is in Accra to meet with President Kufour, restated MDC positions on the election, saying that President Mugabe seeks to prolong the current period of uncertainty to play for time, and hopes for an outcome to his advantage. The MDC believes that election results should be released as soon as possible, noting that Mugabe's term is legally over, and that he is technically a caretaker president. If a runoff does occur, the MDC would press for three conditions: 1) a new Electoral Commission, 2) an end to violence and 3) that the Southern African Development Community provide security forces to insure a peaceful election. Biti said that participating in the March 29 election was a major decision for the MDC given the GOZ's pre-election attempts to skew voting. He called the results a "miracle."

13. (C) The MDC officials underlined the need for international pressure on Mugabe to continue. They said the MDC would call for economic sanctions against Zimbabwe should Mugabe attempt to remain in power, along with the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition. Maposa said that sanctions would hurt ZANU-PF leaders who are now profitting from black market conditions.

14. (C) Discussing the role of SADC in negotiating a solution to the crisis, Biti said South African President Mbeki is now becoming "part of the problem" due to his perceived unwillingness to push Mugabe, and that criticism should be directed toward Mbeki. Other governments, including Botswana, Tanzania, and Zambia, have expressed a desire to be more helpful, but there is a tendency for leaders to defer to Mbeki in the role of mediator. The MDC officials hoped that one southern African leader would break ranks with Mbeki and openly say that the current impasse was not acceptable. Biti and Maposa left the meeting to meet with President Kufour. Biti told POLOFF that he wanted to present the facts of the

current situation to Kufour.

15. (C) Biti commented that the crisis has the capacity to become a Kenya-like situation, with violence. He said that the MDC was trying to pursue "legitimate efforts" through the courts and diplomacy, and while they have the option, they have chosen not to send people into the streets to "throw stones and bend things." POLOFF asked Biti about the MDC's contacts with Zimbabwean security forces. Biti said that senior military leaders approached the MDC prior to the election, concerned about their economic status in a post-ZANU-PF Zimbabwe, and assurances were provided. Biti added that the MDC was talking with other opposition parties in Zimbabwe.

16. Later on April 16 POLOFF spoke with Maposa following the MDC meeting with Kufour. Maposa termed it a productive meeting. When asked if Kufour would issue a statement, Maposa said no, "not if he wants to remain effective." When asked if Kufour would contact Mbeki, Maposa was evasive.

17. (C) COMMENT: At this stage, we believe it is unlikely that President Kufour will speak out publicly on the Zimbabwe situation. During its first term, the Kufuor administration publicly criticized Mugabe, but these statements were not well received in Ghana, where Mugabe has long-standing connections (having taught here and married a Ghanaian). This assessment is shared by our UK colleagues, who were in contact with the GOG prior to the MDC meeting. Kufour may lobby Mbeki quietly, however. END COMMENT.
BROWN